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THE  
EASTERN QUESTION  
IN ITS  
HISTORICAL BEARINGS.

*An Address*

DELIVERED IN MANCHESTER, NOVEMBER 15, 1876.

BY  
EDWARD A. FREEMAN, D.C.L., LL.D.

*Revised by the Author.*

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## THE EASTERN QUESTION.

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AS my subject is specially the historical bearings of the Eastern question, perhaps you will bear with me if I go back very far indeed ; because the causes of the events which are going on now are really not thoroughly understood unless you go back far indeed, before the beginning of what is called modern history, I might almost say before the beginning of ancient history. I must ask my friends the geologists, in whom Owens College is by no means lacking, to bring their science to help my more strictly historical treatment. The history of the world is the history of Rome. The history of the particular part of the world with which we have to deal this evening is the history, not of the Old Rome by the Tiber, but of the New Rome by the Bosporos. And yet, to understand the position of the New Rome by the Bosporos, we must go back to the older Rome by the Tiber. The peculiar position of the New Rome is wholly derived from the fact that it was the New Rome, that it succeeded to the mission which the Old Rome began. Now, to go back to our geology, I may say that the fact that a few small hills by the river Tiber lay nearer together than any of the other hills of the neighbourhood has determined the history of the world. Each hill-top in that land became a city ; but there was one point where several hills came closer together, where the fortresses and cities that were founded on these hills were able to coalesce into one fortress and one city. That fortress and that city became the Old Rome, and the history of the Old Rome determined the whole history of the world. A time came when the world, the whole civilized world of the time, had become Rome. A time came when the walls of Rome were not to be found by the banks of the Tiber, but were to be found in the northern part of our own island, fencing off the Roman dominion from the Pict and the Scot, and in the extreme east, fencing off the Roman dominion from the attacks of the Persian. When these days came, the Old Rome on the banks of the Tiber was no longer the fitting centre for a dominion which had swallowed up the city in which it had its beginning. Then Constantine removed the seat of empire to a new spot. He was not the first to do so. Other emperors



before him, and others after him, found that Rome was no longer a place from which the world could be ruled. But among many shifting seats of empire one was found better suited than any other, one which has remained the seat of empire to this day, and which, I venture to say—and this is one of the most important points in the politics of our own day—must remain the seat of empire as long as there is such a thing as empire in this world. There, on the Bosporos, the old Greek city of Byzantium became, at the bidding of Constantine, the New Rome, the city of Constantinople, or, as we call it, Constantinople. Had that city remained the simple Greek city of Byzantium, it could never have put on that character. When it was clothed with the character of the New Rome, it became all that it has been since, the centre of Eastern Europe, the place where, whoever it is that bears rule, be he Roman or Frank or Greek or Turk, the centre of dominion for those lands must be, and nowhere else. It has been so for fifteen hundred years, and every sign of the times shows us that it must be so still. Remember that the Roman Empire was not a national power. Its essence was the bringing of all the nations, all the civilized Powers, of Europe, Asia, and Africa, under the power of one city, whose citizenship was gradually extended over all the civilized world. But it was not a national power. A time came, after the seat of empire had been removed to the East, after the New Rome had become the great Rome rather than the Old, when it gradually did put on a national character. One by one its provinces were lopped away. Western Europe was lopped away by the Teuton; Asia and Egypt were lopped away by the Saracen. Thus, gradually and slowly, but surely, the Eastern Empire of Rome became co-extensive with what I may call the artificial Greek nation. The mass of its inhabitants, whether Greek by blood or not, had adopted the Greek language and Greek civilization; and, as time rolled on, they were parted off from Western Europe by their adherence to the Orthodox or Eastern as distinguished from the Western or Latin Church. An artificial nation was thus formed; and with that nation the Eastern Empire of Rome became co-extensive, so that, in Eastern lands, the names Greek and Roman came to have nearly the same meaning. There was a power whose traditions were Roman, whose people called themselves Romans, but whose language, literature, and civilization, were not Roman but Greek.

This brings me to the question, Who are the nations who inhabit the great eastern peninsula, the most eastern of the three great peninsulas of southern Europe. There is Spain; there is Italy; and there is the third peninsular land for which it is hard to find a name, which some call the *Balkan peninsula*, some the *Byzantine peninsula*, but which, under whatever

name, takes in those lands with whose history and present state we have now to deal. So far as we can go back, we find three chief nations within that peninsula. All three are still there, and there are some others there beside them. First, there are the Greeks, who inhabit their own land of Greece, with the islands and the coast of the *Ægean* generally. The Greeks were essentially a sea-faring people, and while the whole coast was studded with their colonies, they seldom, except in their own land, settled far from the sea. This characteristic of the nation remains to this day. Secondly, there are the old Illyrians, who remain under the name of Albanians, a people who are now partly Christian and partly Mahometan, who have played a great part, and no doubt must play a great part in the history of those countries at any time. These Illyrians or Albanians seem in all ages to have shewn a greater power of identifying themselves with the Greeks than is shewn by any other of the neighbouring nations. A considerable part of Greece is now inhabited by people of Albanian descent. The third nation is the Thracians, and I think there is little doubt that the Thracians are now represented by that singular people who, after so many ages, still keep the Roman name. The principality of Roumania lies north of the Danube : but do not fancy that the Rouman nation and language is at all confined to that principality north of the Danube. The Roumans are still found in many other parts of the Eastern peninsula, and they seem in past times to have occupied a much larger portion of it than they do now. It was a great migration of later times which gave rise to the present Rouman principality. I do not at all believe that the Roumans are the descendents of the Roman colonists in Dacia. The land which is now Roumania was for ages the highway of every barbarian tribe pressing to the West ; it had been given up by the Romans in very early times ; and it is hardly possible that the Latin language could have lived on there while it died out everywhere else around. But if you believe that the Roumans represent the old Thracians, that the Thracians learned to speak the Latin tongue, and that the Roumans of the modern principality were a later settlement from the South, you have the whole problem solved. You have the Greeks ; you have the Illyrians, represented by the Albanians, and keeping their own language ; you have the Thracians, who, like the nations of the West, adopted the Latin tongue, and who still survive as Roumans.

Such were the phenomena of the great Eastern peninsula till we come to the sixth century. No doubt there were earlier movements of the same race, but it was the movement of the sixth century which immediately concerns our present subject. This movement was the coming of the people whose past fate is the main subject of the history of those lands, whose future fate



is the great problem in the present politics of those lands. The sixth century was the time of the coming of the Slaves. The Slaves came into the Eastern Empire very much in the same way in which our own Teutonic fathers and kinsmen came into the Western Empire. They came in all manner of characters, as captives, as mercenaries, as colonists, at last as conquerors. In a rough way the position of the Slaves in the East answers to the position of the Teutons in the West. But there are some important points of difference, and the most important point of all is, that the Teutons had to deal with the Old Rome and the Slaves had to deal with the New. Old Rome passed over and over again into the hands of Teutonic kings and conquerors; but Rome always led captive her conquerors; she exercised a direct influence over those who conquered her. In the days when Rome had the greatest influence over the whole world, the local Rome was of hardly any practical importance. It was not Rome as a city, it was the great artificial fabric of the Roman dominion and the Roman name, which bore rule over men's minds. Old Rome was not the unconquered city, the all but impregnable city, that the New Rome was. No barbarian conqueror ever made his way into the New Rome; from the time of her new foundation by Constantine, New Rome, Constantinople, still remained the city of Emperors who kept up their unbroken succession from the Emperors of Old Rome. From the fourth century to the thirteenth, the great difference between Eastern and Western Europe lay in the position and strength of that one city which could stand out against all assaults. There were incursions without end; barbarian invaders might pass by; they might ravage the surrounding lands: they might occupy the inland provinces; but the Imperial city itself was never taken; the Roman power went on unbroken. You must now bear in mind how great a part of the Eastern peninsula is, how much greater a part once was, occupied by the Slaves. They spread far beyond the regions which are marked as Slavonic in our maps. They spread over nearly the whole of Greece, leaving only the sea-coast and the chief cities to the Empire. From those cities I have no doubt that Greece was won back, and again became a Greek land. Through nearly the whole of the Eastern peninsula, save where the Greeks still kept the coast, where the Albanians still held out in their mountains, where the Thracians or Roumans were scattered here and there, the rest of the land became practically Slavonic.

And now begins another series of incursions, another series of revolutions. Late in the seventh century nations began, not only to invade, but to settle within the Imperial territory, who were absolutely alien in blood to all the earlier inhabitants—nations which were not European nations at all, nations which did not belong to that great Aryan stock to which nearly all the

nations of Europe belong. We now come to the days of the great Turanian settlements, three in number. We need not enter into the differences between these Turanian settlers among themselves. It is enough that all of them were altogether alien to all the European nations, Greek or Latin, Teuton or Slave. Of these three Turanian settlements, the first two passed into Europe by the same path, and at no very great distance of time from one another. There were the Bulgarians late in the seventh century, the Magyars or Hungarians late in the ninth. These both came by the same path, the old path by the north coast of the Euxine. The third Turanian settlement was no other than that of the Ottoman Turks, who came in ages afterwards by another path and under wholly different circumstances. Now this is a point to which I wish specially to call your attention, because the difference between these two earlier Turanian settlements and the third which came ages after is the root of the whole matter for the past, for the present, and for the future. Each of the three settlements has its own marked and distinct character. The difference of the character of each is the result of historic causes, and that difference of character has worked the most important results of all as to the question which is now the great question of our own time. First came the Bulgarians. It may seem a strange doctrine to some that the original Bulgarians and the original Turks were, I suppose I may say, kinsfolk. Both of them were nations altogether foreign to Europe, and they most likely had some distant connexion among themselves. These Bulgarians, whose name now calls up the memory of the saddest tale of sorrow of our own time, who are now sufferers under the hand of barbarian masters, were once a terror to Constantinople, her rulers, and her people. Their name was then as fearful as the name of the Turk ever was afterwards. The first Bulgarians were Turanian and heathen invaders. It is because they were heathen invaders *then* that they are able to be Christian sufferers *now*. This may seem a strange connexion of cause and effect; but so it is. The original Bulgarians, the first Turanian settlers, were probably a small body, and in a short time there was no way of distinguishing between the original Turanian Bulgarian and the Slave who had taken his name. They adopted the Slavonic language; they adopted the Christian religion, and they became for a while a great people and a great kingdom. We may believe that, but for the greatness and strength of the New Rome, Constantinople would have become Slavonic, either through the Bulgarians or through some other Slavonic people—for we must practically count the Bulgarians as a Slavonic people—at least in the same sense in which the Old Rome became Teutonic. Constantinople would have passed into the hands of Slavonic conquerers. As a mixed system, Latin

and Teutonic, had arisen in the West, so a mixed system, Greek and Slavonic, might have arisen in the East. But New Rome was there in her strength, in that strength which was her greatest weakness, the strength which enabled her to resist all assaults, but which hindered her from calling in her enemies into her own pale, in the same way in which the Old Rome could do in the West. Through all changes, through all assaults, the Imperial city remained untaken; but for that very reason the body was separated from the head. The body was Slavonic; the head was Roman or Greek, whichever we may choose to call it.

Presently there came another band of Turanian conquerors, the Magyars or Hungarians, who, after ravaging far and wide for many years, also settled down, and became, as the Bulgarians became, a Christian and European people. Meanwhile, Constantinople stood in all her strength, the mistress, one might almost say, of the world—at all events of the Eastern world; subject to constant attacks from every enemy, but still unconquered and untaken. In the beginning of the thirteenth century a new enemy came. The Christians of the West, Franks and Venetians, going forth, as they said, on a holy crusade to deliver the Holy Sepulchre from the Turk, turned aside to sack the Eastern Rome, and to bring the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire, as far as they could, into bondage. In 1204 Constantinople was taken by the Latins or Franks—Franks, that is, in the general sense in which the name Franks takes in all Western nations. Thus the old Eastern Empire was broken up for ever, and a number of small states, some Greek and some Frank, arose. After a while Constantinople was won back by the Greeks. Mark that the Latin dominion was conquered bit by bit, but, as always happened, Constantinople was taken last. Then, in the course of the fourteenth century, comes the great change, the great and fearful change which is the source and cause of all that we have to think of now, the coming of the Ottoman Turks. Hitherto nations had been pouring in one upon another, but they were nations which at least had some points of agreement. They might differ in language; they might differ in manners; they might differ in religion, so far as they belonged to different branches of the Christian Church; but still they had much in common. They were all Europeans; they were all Christians. The pagan Bulgarian had embraced Christianity; the pagan Magyar had embraced Christianity; and with Christianity they had embraced the civilization and manners and feelings of those who had taught them Christianity. In a word, Bulgarians and Magyars had become Europeans.

*But now came a people of another kind; a people who had nothing in*



common with the languages, the laws, the religion, the general civilization of Europe—a people who were great simply as conquerors, simply as destroyers, a people who could not do as their earlier brethren had done, who could not become the disciples of those of whom they were the conquerors, who could not embrace the religion and the civilization of Europe. The Ottoman Turks grew, not into a nation—for in strictness we cannot say that they have ever been a nation—but into a power—a power dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, a power which above all other powers was to break down and destroy, a power which overthrew alike the Christian and the Mahometan states of Asia Minor, which then made its way into Europe, and at last made its way into the New Rome itself. Mark what was the condition of the Eastern peninsula in the fourteenth century, when the Ottoman Turks began to show themselves. It was, through the results, first of Slavonic immigration, then of Latin conquest, broken up into a mass of small powers, Slavonic, Greek, or Frank, as the case might be. For one moment, just before the Ottomans came, there was what seems to me to have been the last gleam of hope for these countries. If the great Servian King, Stephen Dushan, when he had brought the greater part of the peninsula under his power, could have won New Rome—if the body and the head could have been joined—if the nation could have won for itself a capital, and the capital could have won for itself a nation—if Greek and Slave could have become one—surely the traditions and the strength of Constantinople, combined with the national life of Servia, might together have beaten back the Turk. But the Servians never could win Constantinople; therefore the body remained without its head, and the head remained without its body, and both were swallowed up. I remember years ago reading a story which made one's very flesh creep, of a man who was shut up in a chamber with seven windows, and day by day he saw one window fewer than there was the day before. The room grew smaller and smaller, till it shut down upon him and crushed him as an iron shroud. So it was with New Rome before the Turks. All the lands around were conquered; Bulgaria was overcome; Servia was overcome. The great Greek outpost, the city of which we have heard so much of late, Thessalonica was taken. Nothing was left but the Imperial city itself, with its possessions in Greece and the distant Greek empire of Trebizond. At last, on the 29th of May, 1453, the day came when the heathen came into God's inheritance, and the holy temple of the whole East was defiled. Then the Turks stormed the Imperial city; then the last Emperor who bore so worthily the glorious name of Constantine, died in the breach, and gave his life for his city and for his Empire. Then all was over. There was little more within the old dominions of the Empire to

be gathered in. Within a few years Peloponnesos and Trebizond were conquered. But for a while the Turks spread their dominion much further.

But it was only for a while. In the sixteenth century—it is a point well to be remembered now—the greater part of Hungary became a Turkish province. In that land the Magyars are making common cause with the Turks through common hatred of the Slaves. But these Magyars in their pride would do well to remember that, as there is a pasha at Bosna-Serai—unless my friends the Montenegrins have turned him out—as there once was a pasha at Belgrade, so there once was a pasha at Buda. What Bulgaria is, what Servia was in the days of our grandfathers, that Hungary was at an earlier time, a land bowed down under Turkish bondage. And it was by Slavonic swords that she was saved. Might not Hungary still be what the neighbouring lands are, what Hungary grudges that those lands should cease to be, if Sobieski and his Slaves had not come to win her freedom, and to drive out the barbarian from her borders? Thus, from the middle of the fourteenth century to the sixteenth, the Turkish power went on increasing in Europe. Why did it go on? Why did it advance, seldom resting, never resting for any long while, but, with few exceptions, always advancing, for nearly three hundred years? There were several reasons. First, unlike most Eastern dynasties, which commonly fell to pieces after two or three generations, this one lived on under a succession of great princes, great, if by greatness we mean the carrying out of vast purposes, the successful adaptation of means to ends. In this sense no dynasty ever produced a succession of such great rulers for so long a time as the early Sultans of the Ottomans. In Mahomet the Second, the Sultan who won Constantinople, Ottoman greatness and Ottoman wickedness alike reached their height. He was indeed a man endowed with every gift and stained with every crime. And these great rulers were supported by forces which only such rulers as they could have wielded. I just now said that in strictness the Ottoman Turks cannot be called a nation, but merely a power. It was not by Turkish hands that Constantinople was stormed. Far more than by Turkish hands it was by Greek and Slavonic hands. It was stormed by the Janissaries, by those whom the Sultans had torn away from their home and faith to become their most faithful and trusted servants. Surely of all the schemes that human wisdom in a bad sense, that wise wickedness ever could devise, there never was anything like the tribute of children. By the principles of the Mahometan faith, tribute was due from men of every other religion to the Turk, and one form of tribute was the tribute of children. At certain fixed times the handsomest, *strongest, and most promising* boys were carried off; they were brought up

in the Mahometan religion, and they became the chosen soldiers and civil servants of the Sultan. All the best promise of the subject nations was thus taken from them, and made the instrument of their enemies. As long as that tribute was levied, the subject nations could not revolt. Those who would have been their leaders in revolt were taken from them, and turned against them. Also remember how the Ottoman Sultans were served by Christian renegades from every nation. Men went and turned Mahometans; they made their fortunes, and were promoted to high office. During all the time of Ottoman greatness, during all the time when the Ottoman Empire was advancing, the chief power was placed far less in the hands of native Turks than in the hands of Christians who had forsaken the Christian religion to take service under the Sultans. Thus the rule of the Turk was established; and now remember what the rule of the Turk is.

We constantly see now such phrases as "The integrity and independence of Turkey;" "Turkey wants this and that;" "Turkey is to be regarded;" "The susceptibilities of Turkey are to be thought of;" "Turkey sends its ambassadors;" "Turkey does this and that." Believe me, it is not Turkey that does any of these things; it is the Turks who do them. You must make that distinction. If by Turkey you mean the land and the people as distinguished from their masters, if by Turkey you mean a certain portion of the earth, and the mass of the people who live in it, then I say that whatever is for the interest of the Turk is against the interest of Turkey. There is no man in this room, there is no man in the world, there is no diplomatist with his meaningless chatter and empty formulæ, there is no ambassador or Foreign Secretary, who more earnestly desires the independence and integrity of Turkey than I do. But, to win the independence and integrity of Turkey, the land and its people, there is but one way, and that is to free them from their barbarian rulers. Do not be misled by mere words or mere formulæ. If we talk of the interests of England and of the interests of the English, we mean the same thing. If we talk of the interests of France and of the interests of the French, we mean the same thing. But if we talk of the interests of Turkey and of the interests of the Turk, we mean two exactly opposite things. The dominion of the Turk, from the first day when he came into Europe, from the first day when he began his conquests in the further lands of Asia, has been the most hateful of all rule, the rule of race over race, of religion over religion. Most of the powers of Europe have been founded in conquest; but other conquerors have, in course of time, become one with the conquered people. Sometimes the conquered have taken to the language and manners of the conquerors; sometimes the conquerors have taken to the language and manners of the conquered; but in all Western Europe the assimilation of



the two has taken place sooner or later. But to the east of the Hadriatic there is as wide a difference now as there was five hundred years ago, between the descendants of the original conquerors and the descendants of those who were conquered by them. Why is it that one set of barbarian invaders, the Bulgarians, could unite with their subjects and neighbours, and could form along with them a Christian and Slavonic nation? Why could not the Ottoman Turks do the same? Why could they not have merged in the same way among their subjects and neighbours? Why do they remain to this day a distinct and ruling people, a people of oppressors? There is one great reason. I told you that, because the Bulgarians were heathen invaders, therefore they were able to become Christian sufferers. Had the Turks been heathens, had they been mere savages, they might in the same way have been won over to a higher civilization and a purer faith. But because they had half light, because they had a religion which was a half truth, because they had a kind of half civilization, they were unable to rise to something better. They were obliged to remain at the point where they were, or rather to fall back from it. They were professors of the religion of Mahomet. The Arabian Prophet himself worked the greatest of reforms in his own country and time. No man was ever more thoroughly and honestly a reformer than Mahomet was in Arabia in the seventh century. But, by laying down civil precepts to be observed to all eternity, he has kept his followers for ever at a certain intermediate level between real civilization and mere barbarism. Above that level they cannot rise. The first principle of the Mahometan religion is that the true believer must bear rule over the infidel. It was only towards the end of Mahomet's life that he found that out. There was a time in his life when Mahomet was a persecuted sufferer for righteousness' sake; but, when he grew powerful, he felt the corrupting influence of power, and his latest legislation was a proclamation of war against all other nations and religions. A Mahometan power, to be perfect after its own kind, must have subjects. It is great as long as it is conquering; when its days of conquest pass away, it becomes weak and corrupt. Here then is the main difference between the settlement of the Bulgarians and the settlement of the Ottomans. It was because they were Mahometans, because they were not pagans, because they had a religion which was far better than paganism, that they were hindered from embracing a religion which was better still. It was because they already had a system which was far higher than mere barbarism, that they were hindered from rising to a higher civilization.

Now let me call your attention to one or two common fallacies. When we talk of oppressed nations, we are told that the oppressed nations are as *bad as the Turks*. When we speak of Eastern Christians, people cry out

"What Christians!" Very much the same kind of Christians as we should be if we had been groaning under Turkish bondage for five hundred years. Believe me, subjection to bondage, and such bondage as this, the cruellest and most corrupting of bondage, is not an improving process. Yet there are many who will tell you that, because these people in their slavery do not show all the virtues of freemen, therefore, in order that they may acquire those virtues, they should be for ever kept in bondage. The only way for a people to acquire the virtues of freedom is by the practise of freedom. The argument reminds me of the man who said that he would not go into the water until he could swim. We believe that in the last five hundred years we have made great progress, and all the nations of Western Europe may fairly say the same. Could they have made that progress if all that time they had been under Turkish bondage? Surely not. It is very much to the credit of these people if they are no worse in the nineteenth century than we were in the fifteenth; it is not at all likely that we ourselves under the same circumstances would be any better. We may believe that in the fifteenth century the Western nations were far more advanced than the Eastern nations; so that, if they are now on the same level as our fathers were in the fifteenth century, it is infinitely to their credit. Remember that every one of these people is a martyr to his religion. Every one of them might, by giving up his religion, transfer himself from the ranks of the oppressed to those of the oppressors. Millions have gone on for ages bearing that long martyrdom, and I say that men who can do that are worthy of freedom. Do not be led away by those malignant people who rake up every story that they can find, true or false—nine-tenths of them are false, though a few are unluckily true—against every Eastern Christian. There was one false and foul-mouthed writer, in the *Standard* newspaper I believe, who took upon himself to slander the virtue and honour of a class of people who are models of virtue, models of chastity, the women of Bulgaria. That slanderous, lying, statement is a specimen of the kind of thing which is daily said against these unhappy people.

Again, some people say to me that Christians have done things just as bad as the Turks have ever done. I allow it. They say that there was a time when the peasantry of some countries of Western Europe were as badly off as the subjects of the Turk are now. I allow it. Some people ask me—Did you ever hear of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes? Did you ever hear of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, of the doings of the Spanish Inquisition, of the burnings of our own Mary, of the embowelings of our own Elizabeth. Yes, I know all these things pretty well; but what do they prove? Do such things go on in any part of Western Europe now? Take the most backward of



Western countries, the country which is supposed to lag behind all others, the land where religious toleration has made the least progress, the kingdom of Spain. The Spanish Protestant suffers real and vexatious restrictions in the practice of his religion. But let that Spanish Protestant remember what might have been done to him only a hundred years ago. He has still real and serious grounds of complaint, but there is now no fear of his being burned at an *auto-da-fé*. This most backward of European countries has at least made one great step in advance—it no longer burns people for their religion. All of us, all the nations of Western Europe, are, we may say it without doubting, better than we were three hundred years ago. Some Christian Governments, I have no hesitation in saying, have treated their subjects who were not Christians, or were Christians of other Churches, even worse than the Turks now treat the Christians. I fully admit it. A Protestant in Spain, until within the last hundred years, would have bettered his condition by going and living in Turkey. Would he better it now? All Western countries have improved, while the Turks have not got better but worse. The rule of the Turk has got worse, because it has got weaker and more corrupt; it has reached the highest point of cruelty, violence, and injustice, such injustice as we may safely say was never known in the earlier and better days of the great Sultans. Things go on now as I feel sure they could not have gone on in the days of Solymán the Lawgiver. The rule of the Turk cannot be reformed, because its essential principle is the bondage and degradation of men of all religions but the Mahometan.

Remember again that Mahomet himself was a reformer; he reformed the two great evils of Eastern life, polygamy and slavery. But, in reforming them, he destroyed all hope of further reform, because, in reforming them, he acknowledged and consecrated them, and made them a necessary part of the system of every Mahometan people for ever. As long as any people remains Mahometan, it cannot do without these two institutions, institutions which we hold to be destructive of all social happiness and progress, polygamy and slavery. Therefore Turkish rule cannot be reformed. You may have *hatti-humayouns* and firmans; you may draw, as an Englishman in the pay of the Turk bids us draw, a beautiful picture of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan, anxious for the welfare of all his subjects, labouring night and day to make reforms for their good. Will those reforms ever come? Twenty years ago Abd-ul-Medjid made reforms, and beautiful reforms they were—on paper. But what became of them? Then Abd-ul-Aziz promised reforms—again on paper—and they also came to nothing. Then he was set aside, and Murad was raised to the throne, and it was said *that his reforms would be better carried out than those of his predecessors,*

because Abd-ul-Aziz could not speak French, while Murad could. Abd-ul-Aziz is dead, poor fellow—we do not yet know how. Some believe that he died of his own free will. So there may be people who believe that Edward II. of England and Peter III. of Russia died of their own will. As for poor Murad, we do not know what has become of him, whether he is dead or alive. Anyhow his French did not make much difference; reforms did not come any the more because he knew French. Even if they have the best intentions in the world, the Turks cannot reform unless they cast away the first principle of Mahometanism, unless they make all people of all religions really equal before the law. This no Mahometan power, while it remains Mahometan, ever did, or ever can do. Therefore what is the inference? That a power which cannot make the most necessary reforms, which cannot do the commonest and simplest act of justice, is a power which must be swept away from the earth. We must secure the independence and integrity of Turkey by putting an end to the rule of the Turks. In many lands that rule has been put an end to. Hungary was freed two hundred years ago, though Hungary has forgotten its deliverer. Servia, noble, unhappy, Servia, freed herself in the days of our grandfathers. Then Greece arose and freed herself, and, when Greece arose to free herself, all the world saw what the Turk was. Remember that the Bulgarian atrocities, as they are called, are nothing new. They are simply what the Turk always does whenever he has the power. What he did in Bulgaria just now, he did then in Chios and in Cyprus. It is the nature of the wild beast, which cannot be driven out of him, even if you dress him up in tight-fitting clothes and teach him to talk French. Servia is free; Greece is free; and there was a day, to my mind a memorable and glorious day, when the powers of Europe were united for right and not for wrong, when at Navarino three great European nations, representing three great divisions of the Christian name, Orthodox Russia, Catholic France, Protestant England, joined their forces to crush the might of the barbarian, and to set their brethren free.

We now hear of wars and rumours of wars, of mobilization of armies, of movements of fleets. Are those fleets and armies to be employed for such a purpose as they were then, or for a very different and a worse purpose? When Greece was free, when the three powers crushed the barbarian fleet, the French troops drove the barbarians out of Peloponnesos, and another land was won for freedom and for Christendom. But other lands were still left in bondage. Ten years ago one of those lands rose. The people of Crete, the Christian people of that oppressed island, rose with arms in their hands to win the freedom which the statesmen of Western Europe had deliberately refused

to them. When Greece was freed, King Leopold, the late King of the Belgians, who had always the reputation of being the wisest prince in Europe, was offered the throne of the new-made kingdom. He would have taken it if Crete had been added to Greece. But no; Greece was not to have Crete. The wisdom of Western Europe said that Greece should be free, but that Crete should not. Greece thus lost the services of the wisest of European princes, who, if he had reigned over her, would doubtless have done more for her good than ever has been done, while Crete was left to groan under Turkish bondage. Ten years ago Crete arose, and let Englishmen remember what happened then. While the people of Crete were rising, while they were striving against the Turk, who was our guest here? At that very moment, when Christian and Turk were striving in Crete, we had the Turk himself over here. London mobs cheered him. He was made a Knight of the Garter. The badge of St. George was thrown round the neck of the successor of Antichrist. He was the guest of the Queen. He dined with the Lord Mayor. A ball was given in his honour; though of course he did not dance himself; that is not the manner of a Turkish Sultan. To show how thoroughly we loved our Mahometan ally, to show what good Mahometans we were ourselves, we took the cost of the ball out of the pockets of the unoffending votaries of Brahma. Our Turkish guest went home; and what did he do then? In breach of his word, to pay for the expense of his journey, he increased the taxes, and thereby increased the burthens and sufferings of his Christian subjects. Meanwhile Crete was striving for her freedom; and by the shores of Crete there were English ships, and those English ships were manned by men such as we hope that English officers and seamen always will be, men who were ready to stretch forth their hands to help the oppressed. They did stretch forth their hands and they did help the oppressed. They carried old men, women, and children to a safe shelter. Then there came an order from the English Foreign Office to say that such a deed was not to be done again. To rescue a Cretan man, woman, or child, from robbers, murderers, and ravishers, would be to interfere with the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. Such a deed was not to be done any more. No English officer, consul, or sailor was to do anything for any oppressed Cretan. I do not say who gave that order. Go and see for yourselves who was the man who was then in power. I will not give any name to the man who did that deed, or to the deed which he did. I leave it to you as Christian men and Christian women, as Englishmen and Englishwomen, to give that man and his deed the name which they deserve. Then last summer *there began the present revolt.* The men of the rugged land of



Herzegovina, trodden down by intolerable wrongs, rose sword in hand to win their freedom. Presently there came a despatch from the English Foreign Office—a despatch which was addressed to our own Ambassador, but which was to be shown to the Turkish Minister here, and which was therefore to be seen by the Turk out there—a despatch in which the man who represents England in the eyes of foreign powers wrote these words: “Her Majesty’s Government are of opinion that the Turkish Government should rely on their own resources to suppress the insurrection, and should deal with it as a local outbreak of disorder rather than give international importance to it by appealing for support to other Powers.” Thus an English Minister wrote to the Turk, bidding him suppress the insurrection of the Christian people who were rising up against him. Either that man knew; or he did not know, the meaning of his own words. If he had never read one page of modern history, if he did not know what the Turks had done in Chios and in Cyprus, what they have done in later times in Damascus, what they have done everywhere where they have had a chance—if his memory was so short that it could not go back nine years to his own dealings towards Crete—I do not name the man whose memory was so slack; I leave it to you to give him a name and a character. But if he knew what he was doing, if he knew what Turkish suppression of insurrections meant, if he knew that it meant all that had been done in Chios, all that was to be done in Bulgaria, and if with such knowledge he wrote the despatch that contained those words, again I give him no name; I leave it to you as Englishmen and as Christians to give him a name.

Then came the winter; and when the winter was passed, months rolled on, and at last, while these brave men in Herzegovina were holding their own—remember that they have never been beaten, remember that the Turk has never won back the revolted lands—at last the state of things became such that their free brethren, the men of Servia and Montenegro, came to their help. Would you not have done the same here in Lancashire? Supposing your brethren in Cheshire, or Yorkshire, or any part of England, were bowed down under Turkish bondage, and were struggling to be free, would not you pass over the border, and help them? But then, if you did so, someone would arise, and call you wicked and ungrateful, and would say that no deed ever could be so bad as yours; some one would say that you were not acting for yourselves, but that you were stirred up by secret societies, that you were hankering after provinces, and so on. Every bad name, in short, that a certain kind of imagination can devise, would be hurled against you, as it was hurled against Servia when she took her high resolve to do or die for the freedom of her brethren. Servia, after her gallant struggle, has fallen for the moment, though she is far from being so utterly

beaten as her enemies will tell you. But there are other men who have not fallen. There are men who remain victorious against all assailants. Let me ask you to follow me in the journey which I took last autumn. Sail with me along the glorious Dalmatian shores, along those rocks and islands and mountains coming down to the sea—here and there an ancient city guarding the peninsula or nestling at the head of the gulf, till you come with me to the last point of that lovely coast, to the little city of Cattaro, at the foot of the mountain. There you will see a narrow, steep, winding way. Go up that narrow, steep, winding way, and you will find yourself in a land which the barbarian never can conquer. You will find yourself in the outpost of Christendom, in the citadel of Europe against the barbarian invader. There, on the Black Mountain, in Czernagora, in Montenegro, you will find men who, under a wise prince, are civilizing themselves—men who, while Serbia has been overthrown, still remain victorious, with their yataghans and pistols in their hands. Those yataghans and pistols, which I saw last year in a time of peace, are now dyed deep in the blood of the barbarian, and their owners stand firm on the ground which they have won from the barbarian. People say that these Slaves, these oppressed nations, cannot govern themselves, cannot civilize themselves: I say, go and see. Go up to that little state, and see what it has done in thirty years under the rule of three wise princes. It has made greater advances in civilization than any other part of Europe. I do not mean to say that it has reached the full level of the civilization of Western Europe. But that little state has made great advances. Its prince is a man of peace. His two great objects were roads and schools, peaceful things enough. The thing that he sent me and my companions specially to see was not an arsenal, or anything in the military way; he sent us to see his girls' school. That wise and peaceful prince has been driven into war by influences which he could not withstand, influences which no generous man or people could have withstood. The men of Montenegro went down from their mountains to help their brethren. They have helped their brethren, and they at least are victorious.

And now, at this moment, the wisdom of Europe is taxed to find out what is to be done. There is one thing which is not to be done. It is no use preaching any more sermons to the Turks, no use sending them any more Andrassy notes, no use sending them any despatches like the last famous one—a beautiful despatch if it had been sent a year earlier. The Turk will snap his fingers at any mere preachments. No trust must be put in the Turk. This is a matter of common sense. Whenever the Turk has pledged his faith, he has broken it; therefore you must infer that whenever he pledges it again, he will break

it again. Turkish promises must go for nothing. They must be put wholly out of sight. Nor will mere local reforms do. It will not do to set up towns, counties, or parishes with that local independence of which we are here so proud. Why can we have independent local institutions in England? It is because we have a good central Government. Without a good central Government local institutions cannot possibly get on. There was a letter lately published in the papers which seemed to imply that if only good judges were sent on circuit in Bulgaria, then all the wrongs of Bulgaria would be set to rights. We know what English judges are, and we respect and revere everything to do with them. But, because we are used to a good administration of justice, we are apt to forget in how few countries there has been such a thing, and how recent it is in our own country. We sometimes take for granted that justice can be as purely carried out everywhere as it is here. We sometimes forget that there is another officer quite as important as the judge; that is, the sheriff. It is no use having good judges unless you have good sheriffs. In this country our sheriffs are good sheriffs, because they do nothing; but suppose the sheriff of an English county were to interfere personally and corruptly in everything that is done in the sheriff's name—suppose he had behind him a Home Secretary who was ready to back him up in every such piece of personal interference and corruption—suppose there was no Parliament to call either sheriff or Home Secretary to account—where then would be the use of good judges? They might pronounce admirable sentences, but their sentences would not be carried out. That is the state of things in Bulgaria now. You must reform the sheriff and the Home Secretary, before the judge can be of any use there. You cannot have mere local reforms, because, when the central Government is thoroughly bad, corrupt, and faithless, the best local institutions go for nothing. What is wanted is that the direct rule of the Turk shall for ever cease in those lands.

I shall not take upon myself to say in what way it is to cease. It may be done in more ways than one. Remember that, if these provinces were transferred from the rule of the Turk to that of any European power whatever, it would be a vast gain for their people. It might not be the best thing in itself; but it would be a great improvement for them. Nobody wants Russia to take them. They do not themselves want Russia to take them. The only question is whether there may not come a day when, through the fault of the nations of Western Europe, they may be seized by Russia. Our object is to hinder such a result. Our object is to see that they may be set free from the Turk, and not be swallowed up by the Russian. Now besides Russia, there is another great power which seems marked out by nature to be the head of those Eastern lands,



the power which lies to the north-west of them—Austria or Hungary, as we choose to call it. I believe that for one province at least, for Bosnia, where there is a large Mahometan minority, annexation by Austria would be the best thing. Bosnia would thus be under the rule of a power strong enough to keep either side from hurting the other. But if Austria will not take Bosnia, it is not my fault. I cannot make her do so. I have been thinking about this subject for many years; and people who have taken it up just a day or two ago tell me, "There are a great many Mahometans in Bosnia," as if I did not know that. But, if there is no way of saving the Mahometan minority from oppression, except by condemning the Christian minority to oppression, then—though I do not wish anyone to be oppressed, Christian or Moslem, majority or minority—though I believe that there are means of avoiding oppression altogether—I say that, if somebody is to be oppressed, the old oppressor should surely take his turn, and should see what it is to be himself under the yoke. Other people say, "You talk of setting Bulgaria free, but Bulgaria reaches a long way beyond the Bulgaria of the map. Philippopolis, where the worst things were done, is not in the Bulgaria of the map." I should have worked badly at Eastern history if I did not know that. Bulgaria does go a long way south of the Balkan; and, if you are to do any good, you must set that southern Bulgarian land free as well as the rest. Nay more, you must set Epeiros and Thessaly free. The Greeks are beginning to cry out, and with good reason. They say that, if you free Bulgaria and do not free Epeiros and Thessaly, the Circassians and Bashi-Bazouks will come into those lands, that they will lay them waste, and then that they will cross over the border as brigands and plunder the Greek Kingdom. Then people say—What will you leave to the Turks? I answer, the less you leave to them the better. But mark the unvarying course of history. Remember, that when the Greeks won back the land from the Franks, and afterwards, when the Turk himself came, the Imperial city was the last to be taken. Let the Turk keep Constantinople, if he can; but the time must come when he must give up Constantinople too, when the New Rome shall again be Christian, and when Christian worship shall again go up beneath the cupola of St. Sophia. That day must come, sooner or later; and the sooner it comes the better. We must do nothing to hinder it or put it off; we must do nothing which would commit us to the wicked cause, not of the independence of Turkey, but of the wrong doing and oppression of the Turk.

I hear around me rumours of war. I hear the clash of weapons rattling to be drawn. I hear the prattle of diplomatists talking about integrity and independence and all the rest of it—the prattle of the men who shut their eyes to the present and the past, and who think that from their blindness

to the present and the past they can draw some special wisdom not revealed to other men for the settlements of the future. I hear a voice which unhappily can in some sort speak for England, though it is not in any sense the voice of England—though it is a voice in which England and Europe have no share—a voice talking big, and telling us what great things we can do if we draw the sword in the cause of wrong. I hear the brag of the mercenary soldier ready to take arms under any flag or for any cause, eager for anything that will bring him pay or promotion. I hear of English officers debasing themselves by going and taking the pay of the barbarian to fight against the Christian. But above all this I hear better voices. I hear the voice of the English people, saying again, as it said a month or two back, that we will not go to war for the cause of wrong, that we will use whatever power we have for the cause of right. I hear that voice taken up by all Europe, by the whole civilized world, saying that the time is come when we must arise and do right, when we must step in to save the oppressed from the oppressor, not to help the oppressor against the oppressed. I hear England and Europe saying that, in such a cause as this, we will have nothing to do with Asian mysteries and Caucasian marvels, but that we will walk on stoutly and steadily in the one righteous course. I hear them saying, We will act for honour, we will act for interest, but saying too that our honour and our interest are to be sought for in no other way than in the good old way of doing right. I hear them saying that, come what may, be the consequences what they may, if any Power steps in to do the work which we ought to have done, we will not stand up and draw the sword against that power in the cause of the Turk. I hear England and Europe saying that, little as they wish to see the Russian at Constantinople, yet, if the only choice lies between the Turk and the Russian, no English, no European sword, shall be drawn to keep the Turk there. And I hear the voice of a more silent wisdom saying that the New Rome is and ever must be the New Rome—that Constantinople cannot be governed from St. Petersburg and that St. Petersburg cannot be governed from Constantinople—a voice that says that the Russian is far too wise to seek a prize which would be the destruction of his empire. Do not have any sentimental fear of the Russian any more than any sentimental love of the Turk. What Russia seeks in those lands is exclusive influence; and if Russia puts herself forward as the only friend of the people of those lands, who can grudge her such exclusive influence? The way to stop Russia is to deal frankly and loyally with her, not to look on her as a bugbear or a hobgoblin, every one of whose actions and words must be treated with a suspicion which no one would show in dealing with any other European Power. Deal with Russia as you would deal with any other

Power. Do not imagine more blackness in anything that Russia says or does than you would imagine in the case of any other Power. And if we are to check the designs of Russia—if she has any evil designs—it must be done by joining hand in hand with Russia in working the deliverance of these long-oppressed nations. But, if it comes to a question of war with Russia or no war with Russia, we must have the work of the last two months done over again. Every town, every village, from this great city downwards, must raise up its voice, and say that, come what may, we will not draw the sword in the cause of unrighteousness, that we will not again waste English blood and English treasure on behalf of the foulest system of oppression that the world ever saw. Let us say frankly that we have wronged our brethren, and that we will undo the wrong that we have done. Let us say that we have lifted up our voice, that we have stretched forth our hand, and that we will not silence our voice nor draw back our hand, until we have undone the wrong that we have done, until the brethren against whom we have so deeply sinned are free.

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